to participate in the development programmes during discussions with the Board, but no specific proposals/suggestions regarding the involvement have been received by the Board. However, the Board is continuing liaison with these agencies.

Power Crisis

2505. SHRI KRISHNA KUMAR BIRLA: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to the newsitem captioned "Power Crisis darker days ahead" which appeared in Tribune dated the 26th June, 1996;

(b) if so, whether the power crisis continues to increase and the programme to electrify thousands of far flung villages in remote areas remains a dream; and

(c) whether Government have chalked out any plans to increase the production of power and to meet its demand; if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF POWER (DR. S. VENUGOPALACHARI): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Shortfall in availability of power, though certainly affecting the quality of electricity supply to villages, has limited impact on the programme for electrification of villages which largely depends on the quantum of funds being made available by State for the rural electrification programme.

(c) An action plan has been drawn up by the Ministry of Power to improve the performance of the power sector in a phased manner involving short medium and long term measures, covering both the physical and financial aspects of generation, transmission and distribution of power. These, inter alia, include introduction of improved operating procedures, Renovation and Modernisation of old units, strengthening of Transmission and Distribution system, improving the working of State Electricity Boards and better utilisation of generation by transfer from surplus region to deficit region through inter-regional links.

Hydro-Electric Potential in Karnataka

2506. SHRI JANARDHANA POOJARY: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have made any assessment of hydroelectric potential in Karnataka;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the steps, if any, Government propose to take to harness the potential?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF POWER (DR. S. VENUGOPALACHARI): (a) and (b) The hydroelectric potential of Karnataka assessed by Central Electricity Authority is 4347 MW at 60% load factor. The status of development of HE potential in Karnataka is given below:

	MW at 60% load factor (as on 31.7.1996)
—Assessed potential	4347
—Potential developed	1986
—Potential under-development	644

(c) Some of the measures taken by Government towards harnessing the hydro potential are modification in the financial, administrative and legal procedures to attract private investment, creation of central/joint sector corporation, increase in outlay for development of hydro projects, increase in budgetary allocation for central/joint sector projects and arranging funds for hydro projects through external assistance.

Stopping of Drilling Operations in Bengal Basin

2507. SHRI NILOTPAL BASU: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that even after discovery of high quality of oil from